

## REFERENCES

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## POSTSCRIPT

In early 1997 the Department of the Environment invited submissions from interested parties on the proposed addition of *G. borelii* to schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). On 4 June 1997 a draft of this paper together with a covering letter setting out the views of Council were submitted to the Species Conservation Branch of the D.O.E. in Bristol.

## SHORT COMMUNICATION

**Troilism in *Sicus ferrugineus* (L.) (Diptera: Conopidae)**—I was interested to read the recent account in this journal of delayed mating in two males and one female of *Conops quadrifasciata* Degeer (Uffen, R. W. J. *Br. J. Ent. Nat. Hist.* 1998; **11**: 30, Plate I, Fig. 2). Many years ago I remember finding three specimens of *Sicus ferrugineus* locked together as one and running around in the sun on a sycamore leaf. At the time I was more interested in the discovery of what was to me then a new and exciting fly than the possibility that I had observed some sort of mate-guarding behaviour.

My memory was jogged a couple of years ago when another interesting short note in this journal reported two males of the sand wasp *Ammophila sabulosa* (L.) (Hymenoptera: Sphecidae) jostling for the attention of a single female (Callow, N. A. *Br. J. Ent. Nat. Hist.* 1991, **4**: 96, Plate IV, Fig. 2). I thought then to write a short comment on my conopid observations, but time slipped by until the appearance of the recent *Conops* note.

The three specimens of *Sicus* still stand in my collection: two males and a female of *Sicus ferrugineus*, taken together 'in copula' on a sycamore leaf in the sunshine, in the woods above Denton, East Sussex, 30.vii.1970. I clearly recall taking the threesome on a hot July day. Unlike Uffen's tenacious trio, the three *Sicus* separated in the net; one male crawled loose while the true mating pair remained together.

Mate guarding must be quite common in the Conopidae; I have several times seen pairs sitting about on flowers, a male and a female, clinging together, but obviously not coupled. In Nunhead Cemetery and other sites in south-east London I regularly see unattached 'couples' of both *Conops quadrifasciata* and *Conops ceriaeformis* Meigen (the commonest species in this area), sitting together, especially on ragwort flowers.

As with other examples of mate-guarding behaviour, it is probably competition for females which drives the males to invest time and effort in hanging around after the copulatory act. Certainly male conopids always seem to outnumber females, both in the field and also in dipterists' collections.—RICHARD A. JONES, 13 Bellwood Road, Nunhead, London SE15 3DE.